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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 KHARTOUM 000539

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR SE GRATION, S/USSES, AF A A/S CARTER, AF/C  
NSC FOR MGAVIN AND CHUDSON  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

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TAGS: PREL PGOV PREF EAID SOCI KPKO AU UNSC SU

SUBJECT: CODEL KERRY'S MEETING WITH SUDANESE PRESIDENTIAL  
ADVISOR NAFIE

REF: KHARTOUM 470

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires Alberto M. Fernandez for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

**¶11. (C) SUMMARY:** On April 16, Senator Kerry told Presidential Advisor Nafie that the change of administrations in Washington opens an opportunity for the United States and Sudan to begin a new dialogue, and he identified the provision of humanitarian assistance following the expulsion of 13 NGOs by the GoS and implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) as the two principle issues on which Sudan and the U.S. need to engage. Nafie asserted that in previous discussions on the CPA, the U.S. has been biased in favor of the SPLM, rather than a neutral arbiter. He called for a joint assessment of humanitarian needs in Darfur and expressed skepticism that it would show a need for additional international NGOs to enter Darfur. He argued that Sudan and the U.S. should look beyond Darfur and the CPA to discuss &normal bilateral relations8 based on common interests.

END SUMMARY.

Chance for a Fresh Start

**¶12. (C)** Senator John M. Kerry met with Presidential Advisor Dr. Nafie Ali Nafie on April 16 at Nafie's office in the Presidential Palace. Accompanying the Senator were CDA Fernandez, Teresa Heinz-Kerry, Senate staffers Frank Lowenstein and Shannon Smith, and emboffs. Senator Kerry noted that, for better or worse, Sudan's relations with the United States since 2004 has been defined by events in Darfur. Now, he said, with the change of administrations in Washington, there is a chance for a new beginning and a dialogue. Presidential Special Envoy Gration's recent visit had been a good start, he noted. Kerry said that he realized that the USG has a credibility problem in the eyes of the GoS; that the U.S. failed to keep commitments that were made prior to the signing of the CPA in 2005. However, he continued, Sudan and the U.S. also have interests in common, including ending the conflict in Darfur. He said that the U.S. must involve itself in finding such a a solution. The Senator added that he believes there has been insufficient attention to the CPA as a possible tool to achieve peace in Darfur.

**¶13. (C)** Nafie agreed that there is now more of a chance for a substantive dialogue on bilateral relations, based on what is &good for both8 parties, and he promised that &the NCP will not let this opportunity pass." Discussions so far have not produced results, he said, and he placed the blame for this on the U.S. He contended that in previous discussions of the CPA, the U.S. had not been evenhanded, but has been biased in favor of the SPLM. He would not deny that there is

a crisis in Darfur, however, any discussions must be based on reality, not propaganda. The situation there has been distorted, he argued. He asserted that the U.S. public has made up its mind on the situation in Darfur, and politicians are afraid to contradict it, noting that Sudan is ready unconditionally for peace talks but that the rebels are not. He urged that the dialogue be expanded beyond CPA implementation and Darfur to include the entire range of bilateral relations.

**¶4.** (C) Senator Kerry replied that the Bush Administration had acknowledged Sudan's counter-terrorism cooperation, but said as long as Sudan supports Hamas it will be hard for any U.S. administration to remove Sudan from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism. He argued that the Obama Administration will be less ideological and unilateral than its predecessor. For example, he noted that, over Bush Administration objections, he had traveled to Syria twice and met with President Assad. Now the Obama Administration is building on that foundation. However, in the case of Hamas, it will need to change its position of refusing to engage with Israel before the U.S. can engage with it. Nafie replied that this is exactly the type of issue on which the U.S. and Sudan need to engage upon and discuss openly. The point is that we need to identify our differences and then we can discuss them, he said.

#### Areas for Engagement

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**¶5.** (C) Senator Kerry said that there are two principle fronts on which the U.S. and the GoS need to engage. The first is the delivery of humanitarian assistance in Darfur, after 13

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international NGOs were expelled on March 4. The Senator said that while SE Gration had made good progress on his visit, more is required. The agreement with the Special Envoy had brought capacity from zero back to 75 percent of what it had been. "We need to get back to 100 percent," said Kerry, and "we also need to ease the bureaucratic obstacles that the NGOs face." Kerry suggested establishing a &one-stop8 clearing house that could expedite approvals.

**¶6.** (C) The second issue on the agenda, continued the Senator, is building on the CPA. Negotiating the CPA was a significant achievement for Sudan. Now the CPA can provide a foundation for a comprehensive peace in Darfur and elsewhere. SE Gration proposed a tripartite dialogue between the NCP, the SPLM, and the U.S. on CPA implementation, he noted. Senator Kerry said he and the Special Envoy will work together to start a roadmap that the Obama Administration and the Congress can support.

**¶7.** (C) Nafie said that the GoS was pleased by the discussions with SE Gration on his recent visit. On the issue of humanitarian assistance, Nafie disagreed that the humanitarian response is currently less than 100 percent of what it had been and he argued that there first must be a common assessment of humanitarian needs before plans can be made to meet them. He suggested that the joint UN-GoS humanitarian assessment could serve as a basis. CDA Fernandez noted that, even though there is no immediate emergency, residents of the Zam Zam IDP camp had told SE Gration when he visited that there are serious gaps in humanitarian services since the NGOs departed.

**¶8.** (C) Senator Kerry specifically urged that the GoS permit Oxfam-UK and CARE to return. Nafie responded that all of the expelled NGOs had violated their mandates and had been pursuing agendas outside of humanitarian assistance. Asked about establishing a one-stop clearing house, Nafie contended that such procedures already exist under the Darfur Moratorium. When Senator Kerry replied that he had been told there are frequently delays and difficulties in obtaining visas and permits, Nafie responded that an unbiased assessment of the facts is needed and he accused the NGOs of

deliberately misrepresenting the situation. Asked again about Oxfam/UK and CARE returning, Nafie replied that that is not his area of responsibility. Charge Fernandez noted that the GoS reportedly had presented a detailed explanation to the Arab League and the AU of the charges against the Western NGOs, but had not made it available to others. It would be useful see exactly what activities the NGOs are charged with.

¶19. (C) The Senator pressed Nafie to pledge that there would be a return to 100 percent of humanitarian delivery capacity. Nafie replied that if a joint assessment identifies any gaps, they will be filled. He added that he is confident such an assessment will show that there is no need for any of the NGOs to return to Darfur.

#### Outsiders Meddling in Darfur

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¶110. (C) Senator Kerry asked Nafie's views on how the equation in Darfur can be changed. Nafie responded that the fundamental situation there is simple, but is complicated by three external factors. First, the SPLM intervened with the rebel groups as a means of pressuring the NCP. The Sudan Liberation Movement (SLM) was a creation of the SPLM, he contended. Second, the rebel Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) is actually a surrogate of Hassan al Turabi's opposition Peoples Congress Party (PCP) in Khartoum. According to Nafie, all of the JEM leaders are former PCP activists. Finally, Chad supported rebels in Darfur as a means of meddling in Sudanese affairs. Deby had initially resisted this trend but had ultimately been swayed by relatives and other members of the Zaghawa tribe. Nafie went on to claim that the rebel groups do not represent the people of Darfur. He argued that the U.S., the UK, and France need to pressure the rebels and their outside backers to enter peace talks.

#### Comment

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¶111. (C) Nafie hewed closely to the points he made earlier in his meeting with SE Gration (reftel). The NCP is eager to expand dialogue with the U.S. beyond CPA implementation and Darfur to the bilateral relationship. If these discussions are tied to improvements in the bilateral relationship, the

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GOS will have a considerable incentive to follow through on its commitments, which we can measure over time before taking steps on our side. Of all the senior officials we have met with recently, Nafie is the most opposed to the concept of a roadmap that ties improvements in relations to steps taken by the Sudanese, but other senior officials including VP Taha (who specifically mentioned "milestones" in his meeting with SE Gration) seem to understand and accept that this is inevitable. It is worth noting that Nafie's comments about Darfur in paragraph 10 are all accurate; JEM has almost no popular support in Darfur and is closely tied to the PCP, JEM would wither on the vine without support from Chad and Libya, and the SPLM did indeed help create the SLM as a means of pressuring the NCP (something the SPLM readily admits). However this does not excuse the regime for its extreme excesses in waging the war in Darfur in 2003 - 2005, nor should it prevent the NCP from making peace with these groups by offering an attractive political settlement. Nafie's point is that the NCP will need help in exerting pressure on these groups, especially Chad and Libya, if there is to be peace.

FERNANDEZ